

Mr. ERMATINGER to the ELECTORS

GENTLEMEN.—A printed circular has been handed to me by a friend who received it through the post. It is signed by my opponent in this contest, J. H. Wilson, and has I understand been extensively, though privately, circulated. It contains besides charges against the Government, grave personal charges against myself. Yet no copy of this circular was sent to me and only by chance has a copy fallen into my hands. I prefer to say what I have to say in the light of day and in public.

The day following the date of the circular alluded to, Mr. Blake came to this city and addressed the electors for the third time within three months. A proposition was made to Dr. Wilson that Mr. Larke be allowed one hour to reply to Mr. Blake, the latter of course to have the right to deliver the closing speech. This was promptly refused.

Within the past day or two the Grit press in the city has been reeking with personal charges against myself, my relatives and my friends. Even the name of my late father has been dragged into the controversy, because forty years ago he sat in parliament for this district or because he once rented a building to the government—it is not very clearly indicated which is considered the greater crime! It seems I am not fit to be elected, because, also, my father-in-law is a stipendiary magistrate; though, whether the fact of his having acted as an impartial judge at the Riel trial or whether the fact of his having been appointed to his present position by Mr. Edward Blake, when Minister of Justice, is the chief cause of complaint, is not stated. As I was married after the date of his appointment, perhaps it does not matter.

The above facts all impel me to address a few words by way of a final appeal to those electors who may not be able to be within the reach of my voice before they cast their ballots to-morrow.

My opponent in the circular alluded to refer to the franchise and speaks of the disfranchisement of voters. Does he think you have forgotten the disgraceful tactics of his party two months ago, whereby more than a thousand electors of this city were threatened with disfranchisement, while hundreds in the country were actually disfranchised—when, but for the vigilance and activity of his Conservative friends, my friend Mr. Ingram would have been defeated by this dodge? Is it possible that my opponent can have reflected when attacking the Dominion Franchise Act, that but for its provisions a candidate for the House of Commons might be placed in the same peril from which Mr. Ingram so happily escaped.

My opponent attacks me for having written a book upon the Franchise and Election laws of the Dominion and Provinces, and the Government for having purchased copies of it for little more than half the price paid for the work by private purchasers. He chooses to say in the circular alluded to that the purchase would not have been made had I not been a candidate for parliament; while the fact is that that purchase was completed long before I became a candidate. I am not ashamed of the book, which cost me much time and labor, and which was an expensive volume so far as the mechanical work is concerned. I am glad to know that it has been of service to the Reform party in the adjoining county of Kent, and that Mr. Justice Proudfoot, a Reform judge, was able to cite it in support of his decision reversing the decision of the junior judge of that county, who threw out the Reform list of appeals on a somewhat technical ground.

My opponent further charges that I opposed the enlargement of the exemption of incomes from taxation. I have already so often explained that I acted for what I believed to be the interest of the poorer classes in this, that I need say nothing further on this head. No petition or letter from this city indicated to me that the prevailing sentiments against tax exemptions of all kinds had changed. My opponent's organ or one of his fly sheets asserts that there was widespread indignation at the law at the time. No indignation had been developed until afterwards when Doctor Wilson's paid agent, having obtained the position of assessor, proceeded to assess men for incomes they had never received! I may mention that a majority of the Mowat Government voted as I did on this measure.

My opponent charges me with responsibility for a bonus voted by the free-holders of the city! One of his paid advertisements goes further and charges that I was bribed by the railroad, which I have been fighting in the courts for the city, and against which I succeeded in obtaining a verdict of \$12,000—the credit for which latter action my opponent is now claiming for himself!

I am further charged with bribery in offering to do my duty by the railway men, if I be elected. Sir John Macdonald's reply to my communication on this subject you have doubtless seen. Do you disapprove of my conduct as to this? Do you deem it less creditable than that of my opponents who have claimed for their candidate credit for an act on this subject which was framed and carried into law after he had left the House?

My opponent advertises "No coal tax." His leader says he cannot remove the tax.

Only one definite statement as to his trade policy have you got from Mr. Blake,

and that was made at Malvern when he said that the duty on corn meal must go, and wish it will be forced to go the new corn mill recently erected in the east end of this city at considerable expense, by an enterprising citizen. How does this policy commend itself to your judgments? Does the policy of Dr. Wilson's leader, or the conduct of the doctor himself in openly opposing the addition of the Heard Bros. manufactory to the industries of the city, convince you of the wisdom of placing them in power?

Gentlemen, but for the slanders and aspersions cast and the want of fair play displayed, by our opponents, I should have contented myself with addressing you at public meetings. I have invited my opponent to all the public meetings I have called throughout the riding. He preferred to call a separate series of meetings of his own covering the same dates. I make no complaint on this score, but as he has made charges against me by circular I shall not emulate his example with regard to the Blake meeting, but will accord him the hour which he refused Mr. Larke, at either or both of our meetings this evening. I regret that owing to the large number of speakers from a distance who are to address the meetings, it will be impossible to extend the invitation to other speakers on the other side. In view of the action taken with regard to Mr. Larke, you will agree with me that, in making the proposition I have, I am giving every consideration to my opponent to which he is entitled.

Men of St. Thomas, electors of Aylmer and of East Elgin, I ask you in conclusion to set the seal of your disapprobation upon the policy of slander, to-morrow I appeal to you against the attacks of the political ghouls who spare not even the dead from their calumnies. I ask all my fellow citizens, Catholic and Protestant, black and white, Reformers and Conservatives, who value what is decent and just, to give a decisive answer to this wretched policy adopted by our opponents and to stand by their country.

Should any attempt at corruption come to the knowledge of any one of you may I ask you to at once bring the guilty party before a magistrate? An advertisement, insulting to the free and incorruptible electors of the riding has been inserted in the local papers by our opponents offering a reward "for any person or persons found guilty of bribery or corrupt practices in securing the election of Mr. C. O. Ermatinger." Please see that this is not made a cloak for attempts at corruption by our opponents. I warn you also against fresh slanders which may be looked for at the eleventh hour when reply is impossible.

Yours faithfully,

C. O. ERMATINGER.